

Department of Public Health
and Human Services

Section:
APPLICATION PROCESSING

TANF CASH ASSISTANCE

Subject:
Interview / Home Visits

Supersedes: TANF 103-2 (07/01/05)

References: ARM 37.78.101, .102, .226 - .228 and .424

GENERAL RULE--Individuals who are applying for TANF cash assistance are required to be interviewed face-to-face. That interview can be conducted in the OPA or at another location that is convenient for the applicant.

**PRIORITY
APPOINTMENTS
OR
PARTICIPATION
INFORMATION
PAMPHLET**

In order to meet the participation requirement and to prevent loss of federal funds, the OPA must implement one or a combination of the two following appointment processes, when a household requests TANF cash assistance:

1. **Priority Appointments:** All applicants for TANF cash assistance must be scheduled for an interview within 3 working days from the date of application.

NOTE: The application date is considered the first of the three working days.



A Family Investment Agreement/ Employability Plan (FIA/EP) must be negotiated for all required participants at the initial interview with OPA, orientation at WoRC and at the interview when application is made for extended benefits. Participants must be informed of the requirement to immediately participate in the negotiated activities, even if the financial eligibility determination is not yet completed pending other verifications, etc.

2. **TANF Participation Information Pamphlet:** All TANF cash assistance applicants must be given a TANF Participation Information Pamphlet (HCS-710) at the time they turn in the application. The HCS-710 provides a list of possible participation activities that the participant can work on between the date of application and the date of the appointment and a participation calendar that explains the required number of participation hours for single and two parent households. It also provides an example for completing the calendar.

NOTE: The HCS-710 must be explained to the participant at the time it is given to them. It will need to be provided

for each household member who is required to participate in a FIA/EP.

Participants must be informed of the requirement to immediately participate in activities.

INTERVIEW

The face-to-face interview will set the tone for the applicant's relationship with the Eligibility Case Manager and other county staff. Communication focuses on the expectation the individual is responsible and accountable and stresses the **temporary** nature of TANF cash assistance.

Interviewing includes securing specific information about the family's needs and circumstances. The applicant will be instructed to provide verification of specific financial and non financial eligibility criteria (e.g., wage stubs, birth certificates, divorce decree, etc.), and is allowed a maximum of 45 days from the application date to provide information and obtain requested verification unless there are extenuating circumstances.

NOTE: **OPA offices cannot require a completed application prior to scheduling an interview.** An interview may be scheduled without an application being completed. An interview **must** be scheduled when the front page of the application is received in the OPA.

During the interview, the Eligibility Case Manager will provide:

1. Information about available community resources;
2. Information about benefits and services of the various public assistance programs;
3. Information about Family Violence Option (HCS-174 Universal Notification of the TANF Family Violence Option);
4. Explain the individual's rights and responsibilities and complete the assessment of the individual's status regarding probation/parole violations, fleeing felon, or convicted drug felon (See TANF 103-3) The form HCS-220, "Rights and Responsibilities" may be used for this purpose but the participant is not required to sign the form;
5. Explain the purpose of Form HCS-101, "Authorization to Release Information". Because an individual cannot waive another adult's right to confidentiality, each adult household member should be given the opportunity to review and sign the HCS-101;

NOTE: If the applicant(s) does not want to sign the HCS-101, continue with the eligibility determination. Document TEAMS Case Notes (CANO) that he/she was given the opportunity, refused and intend to provide all necessary information without assistance.

6. Information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC);
7. Inform the individual that his/her records are subject to computer matching; and
8. Explain that TANF cash assistance is a time-limited program.
- 9. Explain that cooperation with Third Party Liability (TPL), the Health Insurance Premium Payment System (HIPPS), and Child Support Enforcement (CSE) are basic eligibility requirements, in addition to the requirement to accept and maintain employment.
- 10. Form HCS-100, requesting information on out of state receipt of TANF, if appropriate.

The Eligibility Case Manager's opening statements should establish the employment focus of TANF and allow the applicant to state the family's needs. If an applicant is presently working or has a job offer, information must be given about other community resources which may meet the family's need(s) thus possibly diverting them from programs with time-limited benefits.

The available benefits and specific program requirements such as the Family Investment Agreement/Employability Plan must be explained. Refer to TANF Sections 701-1 and 701-2 for specific policy on the FIA/EP.

HOME VISITS

Home visits can be made to facilitate the eligibility determination for those individuals who are not able to travel to the local office and do not have someone acting as their authorized representative. Home visits can also be made to facilitate case management.

A home visit may be conducted to review all eligibility criteria and family circumstances if information reported or discovered is questionable. A home visit, for eligibility determination purposes, should be made during regular working hours and **prior arrangements must be made** with the applicant/participant. There will be no violation of privacy, personal dignity, harassment or violation of the individual's civil rights. The Eligibility Case Manager will not enter the home by force or search the home.

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Home visits for case management purposes **do not require prior notification** but an explanation should be given that the home visit is offered as a courtesy to assist the household.

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